



SUCCESS STORY

Women Politicians Stir Things Up

Lobbying by cross-party group brings results for women's rights



Photo: USAID/Teresa Albor

Blagorodna Mingova Krepieva, a leading politician in Macedonia who champions women's rights, is also an avid baker.

“Legislative change and training have come together to create electoral opportunities that will benefit all citizens,” says Blagorodna Mingova Krepieva, Chair of the Women’s Parliamentarian Club.

Telling Our Story
U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

Blagorodna Mingova Krepieva is a well-known politician, but she is also famous for her superior baking skills. “That’s because I’m a chemical engineer,” she says, with a twinkle in her eye. “And since I’m often complimented on my baking and at the same time asked if I’m still a good mother and wife even though I’m a Member of Parliament I explain: I am an expert at mixing things and getting good results.”

Not only can Mingova Krepieva mix things, she can stir things up as well. As Chairperson of the USAID-supported Women’s Parliamentarian Club, she led the organization to a stunning breakthrough in passing Article 64, legislation that calls for parties to send more women to represent them in Parliament.

This success was the result of teamwork. Female MP’s from opposing parties joined together, fighting and lobbying their party leadership as well as male colleagues in Parliament. Their efforts were supported by activists and local organizations, who advocated for the legislation.

The new law requires that both men and women be represented among the first three candidates on any given party list and that each successive group of three candidates be mixed as well. Not only does this ensure that at least one third of all candidates are women, but it guarantees they won’t all be at the bottom of the list. Indeed, this law passed, real change is on the way. A record number of woman will be taking up seats in Macedonia’s new parliament: 27.5% of the 120 seats, up from 17.5% in the previous parliament elected in 2002.

This result follows a number of other successes that can be credited to this group in Parliament. They have proposed amendments to family, criminal, and labor law, and promoted equal opportunity laws for men and women.

The article’s passage is a milestone — Macedonia is now seen a leader on gender equality. “Legislative change and training have come together to create electoral opportunities that will benefit all citizens,” says Blagorodna. Thanks to her hard work and that of other Macedonian lawmakers, this is certainly true.